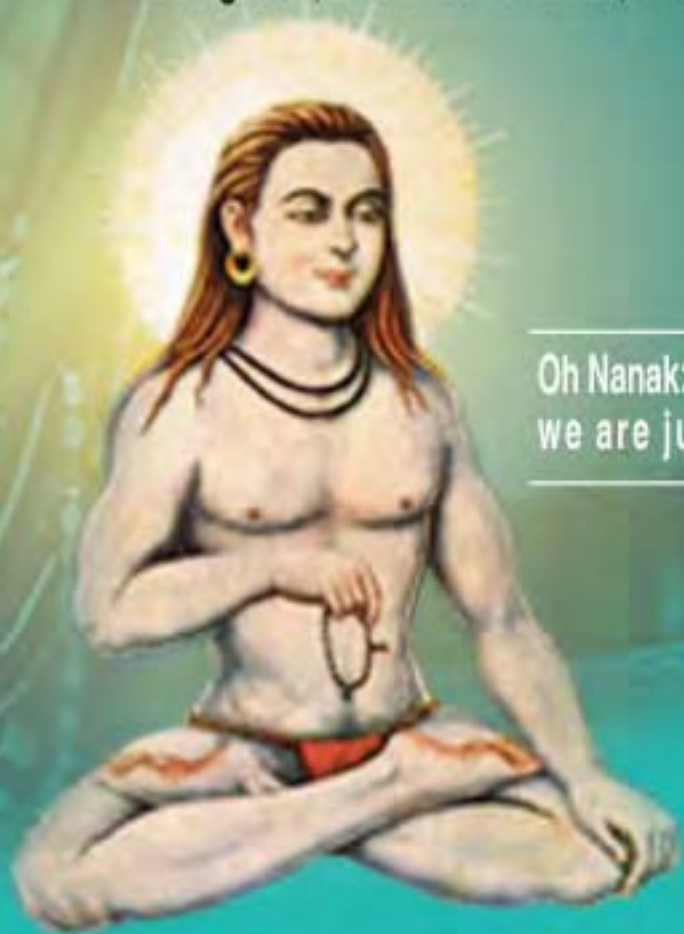


The Miraculous Life of

Baba Siri Chand Ji

Loving Son, and True follower, of Guru Nanak Devji

Oh Nanak: You are the saviour
we are just your children



This picture book is a small tribute to one of India's greatest yet also one of its least known heroes, Baba Siri Chand ji - the great mystic saint and elder son of Guru Nanak Dev ji. In a well-documented period, his life spanned the 149 years from 1494 to 1643. The Emperor Jahangir once asked his Fakir, Syed Mia Mir, "As I am Emperor over all of India, who is the greatest spiritual king among you all?" Mia Mir replied, "Guru Nanak's elder son, King of all Fakirs." The census conducted at the time of Shah Jahan showed that Baba Siri Chand ji had the greatest following throughout his entire kingdom.

While the Guru's gaddi was passed to Guru Angad Dev ji, Baba Siri Chand ji accepted the responsibility from his father and Guru of uniting the various spiritual schools of India. He was revered by Muslims and Hindus, ascetics and householders alike. He carried Guru Nanak Dev ji's message throughout the Subcontinent from Sindh to Srinagar and from Kandhar to Kabul.

Baba ji was held in great esteem by the ensuing 5 Sikh Gurus. Two of them even offered their eldest sons in spiritual service. Guru Amar Das ji offered Baba Mohan ji, who is best known as the custodian of the Guru's *Pothis* (hand-written verses) from which Guru Arjun Dev ji compiled Guru Granth Sahib ji. And most notably, Guru Hargobind Sahib offered Baba Gurditta, who became Babaji's successor and is regarded as the Patriarch of the Udasi Sempardai. Interestingly enough, he was not just the son of Guru Hargobind Sahib, but the father of Guru Har Rai ji, the grandfather of Guru Harkrishan ji, the older brother of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji and the Uncle of Guru Gobind Singh ji. Peace followed Babaji wherever he went and through miracles and teachings he cooled the fires of religious conflict so prevalent in the world of his time.

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Covers and portrait graphics: Larry Polly

Inner Paintings courtesy Brahmputa Akhara – Amritsar

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Gobind Sadan Society for Interfaith Understanding

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gobindsadan-rus.info (Russian)

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A-59, Okhla Indl. Area, Phase-II, New Delhi-20

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Website: www.sterlingpublishers.com



Baba Siri Chand ji Maharaj

Birth and family



With Mata Sulakani ji at birth and Pita Guru Nanak Dev ji

Babaji was born in 1494, in Sultanpur Lodhi, District Kapurthala, Punjab. He entered the world laughing and the room filled with light and fragrance. A thin layer of ashes covered his body and the small curly knots of his hair shone brightly. He was no ordinary son, though he literally worshipped his father. He was a *yogi* from birth, his right ear lobe extended into a natural ring. Many consider him an incarnation of Lord Shivji. From childhood he loved to sit in meditation and developed great powers.

Once Babaji wandered into the jungle. When the town's people searched for him fearing he had been harmed, they found the child deep in meditation surrounded by elephants, tigers, leopards and other wild animals sitting motionless with eyes closed at his feet.

Education



Babaji was in one sense Guru Nanak Dev ji's first disciple, learning meditation and spiritual truths at his holy feet.

A Divine Family: Guru Nanak Dev ji, Mata Sulakani ji, Baba Lakshmi Chand ji and Baba Siri Chand ji.



Defeating the Pandit in debate in Srinagar.

To complement his spiritual education, Guru Nanak Dev ji sent Babaji to Srinagar to study in the school of Pandit Parshotam Das Kaul. While his classmates complained that he never did his homework, he always was first in his class. He was such a good student that he was able to defeat the famous Som Nath Tripathi in Shastra debate. Baba Siri Chand ji stayed in Srinagar for 2 1/2 years during his youth.

Preserving the Family Lineage



Babaji stretches his arm into the sky and brings baby Dharm Chand to earth to save Guru Nanak Dev ji's lineage.



While Babaji himself lived an ascetic life, he not only supported family life, he actually raised the baby Dharm Chand and arranged his marriage. Here he is seen nursing the baby from his toe.

One day brother Lakshmi Chand ji had been hunting. Babaji told him it was a sin to kill innocent animals and that he would have to give account in God's court. Hearing this Baba Lakshmi Chand took his entire household, even the dog, mounted his horse and rode toward Heaven. Baba Siri Chand ji realized that his brother's baby Dharm Chand was the last descendent of Guru Nanak Dev ji. If the baby left too there would be no one to carry on Guru ji's blood line. So Baba Siri Chand ji stretched out his arm into the sky, lifted the baby from his brother's lap, brought him back and raised him as his own son.

Hymn of Praise for Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Baba Siri Chand ji's love and reverence for his father Guru Nanak Dev ji cannot be stressed enough. And similarly Guru Nanak Dev ji's love for his elder son is something to be admired by all families. History has played a cruel trick on this relationship, often portraying Babaji as one passed over in the "appointment" as the Guru's successor and therefore casting Babaji in conflict with the ensuing Gurus. Nothing could be further from the truth. And no where could a child's love be more apparent than in his hymn of praise for Guru Nanak – *Aarta* – which he composed and had the whole Kartarpur Sangat sing to greet and welcome their Great Guru home from his third Udasi.

*“Let us sing the praises of Nanak, King of kings, Emperor of both worlds
The whole cosmos is His temple, congregations sing sweet songs in His praise
Millions of goddesses kindle holy lights in His honor
All the gods sing hymns of His praises
All wash His lotus feet
The Sun and moon illuminate Him with their radiance
He is garlanded with mountains of flowers
The True Master, the fountain of Light is merciful to the poor
The king of the winds fans Him while saints and sages meditate on His holiness
The whole universe vibrates with His celestial song
The bells ring out - Onkar
Continuously illuminating the heavens
He is one with God whose name is Truth
In Nanak saints find their support
Siri Chand, Nanak's son, declares Nanak is unattainable,
unfathomable, unshakeable and pure
Whoever sings Emperor Nanak's praises resides in heaven and achieves complete salvation
Oh kind master: give protection to those who seek your shelter.
Oh Nanak: You are the savior we are just your children”*

The Love between Babaji and the Gurus



*Guru Amar Das ji offers his eldest son Baba Mohan ji to serve
Baba Siri Chand ji*

The sangat asked Guru Amar Das ji, "When we meet Baba Siri Chand ji how should we show our respect?" A few days later, when Guru ji with Baba Mohan ji and Bhai Jetha (Guru Ram Das ji) visited Babaji in Barath, he answered their question by bowing down in deep humility.

Guru Amar Das ji recited "*Anand Sahib*" to the immense pleasure of Baba Siri Chand ji. Babaji was so impressed by Baba Mohan ji that he accepted him as his disciple. Instructing Baba Mohan ji to collect the writings of his father, Guru Amar Das ji, Baba Siri Chand ji gave him the handwritten collections of Guru Nanak Dev ji's bani for safekeeping until they were required. He then sent him home to Goindwal Sahib with Guru ji. Baba Mohan ji used to sit on a deer skin with long hair open.

Siri Guru Ram Das ji



When Guru Ram Das ji visited Barath in 1634, Babaji was in deep in meditation. Guru ji waited patiently for 2 days. When Babaji came out, Guru ji offered him Rs 500, and other gifts of clothing and sweets. They were very happy to see each other. Guru ji recited his bani to Babaji's delight.

When Babaji visited Guru Ram Das ji at Ram Das Pur, he reminded Guru ji of the history of the *Amrit srovar* (sacred tank) and suggested that the city's name be changed to Amritsar. When Babaji visited Amritsar in 1636, Guru Ram Das ji received him warmly, and with great respect seated Babaji on a higher seat than his own. Babaji praised Guru ji. One day in a lighter mood Babaji quipped, "Guru Ram Das ji you have such a long beard!" Guru ji in his unequalled humility replied, "It is to wipe the lotus feet of great men like you," and actually bent forward to demonstrate. But Babaji caught him in a warm embrace. Guru ji shared his plan for Harmandir Sahib and its holy *srovar*.

Siri Guru Arjun Dev ji at Barath



Babaji offers gaggars of holy water from his baoli (holy spring) for Tarn Tarn Sahib Srovar – Till today this tank of holy water has never gone dry.

Guru Arjan Dev ji visited Babaji at Barath in 1655. Two sites still commemorate their meeting. Where the Gurdwara stands today, Guru ji used to wait each day for Babaji to come out of meditation. A second site, a mile away in what was then a jungle, marked the place where Guru Arjan Dev ji used to sleep. When Guru ji shared his goal of compiling Guru Granth Sahib ji, Babaji gave whatever handwritten bani he still had, and suggested that Guru ji obtain the other portions from Baba Mohan ji. Guru ji recited 16 Asatpadis of *Sukhmani Sahib*. Babaji suggested that he increase the bani to 24 verses. On Guru ji's request, Babaji provided the line to resume the 17th Asatpadi. He respectfully chose Guru Nanak Dev ji's verse:

"Aad Sach, Jugaad Sach, Hoebi Sach, Nanak Hosebi Sach"

Siri Guru Hargobind Sahib



Guru Hargobind Sahib presents his eldest son Baba Gurditta to Babaji to serve him. Babaji blesses the boy saying “Gurditta, Din Dunia da Thika” (You are the Prince of both the Spiritual and Temporal Worlds)

After being released from Gwalior Fort, Guru Hargobind Sahib visited Baba Siri Chand ji to thank him for his role in influencing the Emperor Jahangir. Babaji had very strictly told the Emperor that the Guru was the true successor to Guru Nanak Dev ji’s throne and if he didn’t release him, great harm would befall the Emperor.

Baba Gurditta ji who became Baba Siri Chand ji’s successor and Patriarch of the Udasi Semperdai, was the son of a Guru and the father of Guru Har Rai ji. He was also the grandfather of Guru Harkrishan ji, the older brother of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji and the uncle of Guru Gobind Singh ji. So just as Baba Siri Chand ji had remained close to the first 6 Gurus, Baba Gurditta was always in close contact with the ensuing four Gurus. We should remember that when Guru Gobind Singh ji left Anandpur Sahib, he put an Udasi in charge.

Emperors and Leaders Seek His Blessings



Emperor Humayun seeking Babaji's blessings in Sindh on his way to Delhi to regain his kingdom from Sher Shah Suri.



Maharana Pratap seeks Babaji's blessings at Udaipur.

Jahangir's Elephant and the Heaviest Blanket



The Emperor Jahangir had invited Babaji to his court and duly sent his royal elephant to carry him. Babaji laughed and said, "How can such a small creature carry me when he can't even lift my blanket." The courtiers all laughed thinking Babaji was joking. But as soon as they placed the blanket on the elephant, the poor creature bellowed and fell to its knees. The astonished servants bowed in deep respect. Babaji said, "I will come to the Emperor on my own." Such was his simple way of showing God's power to those who felt they occupied high positions in the world.

Babaji Teaches Respect for All Life



In Kandahar Babaji revives the deer killed by the hunter to teach him reverence for all life.

Uniting Sadhu Samaj



Sidhs “fly-in” for an audience with Baba Siri Chand ji at Nanak Chak.

There were many spiritual schools in India at the time. And the Yogis and Sidhs had great spiritual power. But Babaji told them to come out of the jungles and down from the mountain tops, unite, and use their powers to help people in the world. That’s why Babaji was considered the King of all fakirs in India of the time.

Showing God's Power – Everyday Miracles



Babaji brings a dead boy back to life



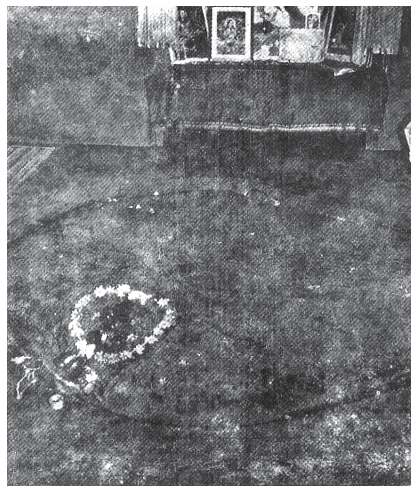
Babaji saves his devotee's ship from sinking.

Sailing Away



Once when Baba Siri Chand ji went to Chamba, the boatman taunted him, "If you have so much power why do you need a boat?" So Babaji stood on a rock and asked it to ferry him across the river.

The stone which Babaji rode on still sits as a memorial to Him on the banks of the River Ravi.



In 1643, when it was time for Babaji to leave the world he marched towards the jungle on a nearby hill, bid goodbye to those following him, and, in a twinkling of an eye, disappeared. Babaji's body was never found. As many great beings before him, he comes and goes as he wishes and appears regularly to those who love him.

Cooling a Burning World



The Chinar tree in Srinagar, Kashmir as it stands today.



As Baba Siri Chand ji was sitting in Srinagar, Kashmir with his sacred fire burning before him, Nawab Yakub Khan came to him, filled with great anger. Out of anger he was creating conflict between the Hindus and Muslims of the area. Babaji took a burning stick from the fire and stuck it in the ground. Immediately the flames vanished and the stick sprouted leaves of a beautiful Chinar tree. Seeing this miracle the Nawab's anger was cooled. Baba Siri Chand ji showed that God's tree is broad enough to give shade to all people, Hindus and Muslims alike. What is so amazing is that this Chinar tree still stands today in Srinagar as a monument to peace. It is called Siri Chand Chinar.

But could this happen today?

It's one thing to tell stories of the great saints and prophets of the past. But given the state of the world and the conduct of religious management today many wonder how this could ever be possible. One may well ask why bother telling these stories if Baba Siri Chand ji's example cannot be applied to solve today's most intractable problems.

Baba Virsa Singh and Gobind Sadan

His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh some 50 years ago started out to answer that very question. And today in his intentional spiritual community, Gobind Sadan (God's House without Walls) on the outskirts of Delhi, visitors are amazed to see what others could only imagine possible – a community in which people from all backgrounds live, work and pray side by side, are taught to revere all prophets and scriptures as their own – in which all holidays are celebrated and work continues to overcome poverty. What others may consider miracles are everyday occurrences. You are as likely to meet a senior political or religious leader from any country of the world as you are a village farmer coming to seek Babaji's healing and blessings. While Guru Granth Sahib Ji is recited 24 hours a day, at the havan which has burned continuously since its establishment in 1968, prayers are read around the clock. Babaji has deputed a Sikh devotee to pray for people at the havan – whatever problems they have are solved. In a pristine garden on the hill stands a lifesize image of Jesus with his arms outstretched. Every day 125 candles are lit and the Lord's prayer offered in whatever languages are represented but often there won't be a single Christian present. There an American woman blessed by Babaji offers prayers for people before Jesus and their troubles melt away. Behind Gobind Sadan's mosque, mandirs to Lord Krishna, Hanuman ji, Lord Shiva, Lord Ram and Goddess Durga dot the hillside. The Shma Place commemorates God's covenant with Abraham and Moses, and images of Lords Buddha and Mahavir invite guests to join them in silent meditation.

So Baba Virsa Singh has proven that by following the example of Baba Siri Chand ji, practising the teachings of all the Gurus and saints, through meditation we can learn to overcome our anger and hatred, through hard work we can alleviate poverty, and through sharing with those in need we can achieve justice in the world.

We can cool the fires of our burning world and bring peace today.

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Baba Siri Chand ji's amazing history has been lost to the world for over 100 years. Who better to resurrect it than Baba Virsa Singh ji, of Gobind Sadan. For when Babaji was still a youth, it was Baba Siri Chand ji who appeared to him and became his Guru.



His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh is a holy person of Biblical proportion. A world-class leader who seeks no worldly position, he does not refer to himself as a Guru or miracle-worker. He comes from a mud-brick village in Punjab, does not read or write in any language, but those of great intelligence, wealth, and worldly power bow at his feet, seek his guidance, and attribute many miracles in their lives to his influence. He quotes extensively from the scriptures of all religions. His special mission is to bring people of all religious paths closer to God, and bring peace by overcoming the conflicts that plague the world. He has worked hard all his life to set an example of how one can rise out of poverty and stresses that without work any philosophy remains just a theory. He is an inspired farmer who communicates with the crops and the land, and they respond with record-breaking bounty. When asked, he says only, "I am just trying to be a better human being."

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STERLING PRESS PRIVATE LIMITED

A-59, Okhla Indl. Area, Phase-II, New Delhi-20

Tel: 26386165 Fax: 91-11-26383788

E-mail: sterlingpublishers@airtelbroadband.in

Website: www.sterlingpublishers.com

ISBN-13 9788178626017

ISBN-10 81-7862-601-2



9 788178 626017

Rs. 40